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STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AFR/SP
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA, USAID/REDSO, AND FAS
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
NAIROBI FOR SFO
NSC FOR JBRAUSE, NSC/AFRICA FOR TSHORTLEY
USUN FOR TMALY
BRUSSELS FOR PLERNER

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SUBJECT: DARFUR Q SECURITY ASSESSMENT OF USAIDQS DARFUR
FIELD OFFICES AND OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

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Summary

¶1. From August 4 to 17, the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) Safety and Security Coordinator conducted a safety and security review of USAIDQs Darfur Field Office (USAID/DFO) operations in El Fasher, North Darfur and Nyala, South Darfur. U.S. Embassy in Khartoum, UN agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organization (NGO) security professionals consulted during the assessment agree that Nyala and El Fasher are sufficiently secure to allow USAID to operate at the moment. The assessment found that the current USAID Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/DCHA) safety and security plan, which was approved in March 2006 and updated in August 2006, meets the safety and security needs of the USAID/DFO. The assessment also identified several potential security concerns that should be closely monitored. End summary.

Locations Visited and Contacts

¶2. From August 4 to 17, a USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator conducted a safety and security review of USAID/DFO operations, traveling to Khartoum, Nyala, and El Fasher. The review included interviews with security professionals and senior representatives from the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum, UN agencies, and NGOs. Additionally, the USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator met with nearly all USAID/DFO staff to discuss the security situation. The USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator also attended UN and NGO security briefings during the assessment trip.

Security Situation in Darfur

13. The USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator reported that economically motivated crime is the most significant security concern for humanitarian agencies in Darfur. In addition to thefts committed by opposition forces, there are regular reports of organized crime taking root in Darfur, with stolen assets being sold to opposition forces and exported to Chad.

14. The UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) reported the following statistics for February through July 2006 as compared to the same period in 2005. UNDSS reported that carjacking and banditry are up 230 percent and 40 percent, respectively; overall security incidents have increased by 123 percent; security incidents involving the UN have decreased by 10 percent; security incidents involving NGOs have increased by 76 percent; security incidents against the African Union have increased by 913 percent; and armed clashes have increased by 100 percent.

15. The assessment found that the security environment outside the state capitals of Darfur remains fluid and volatile. With the continued presence of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) troops and the deployment of UN forces contested, security outside the capitals of Darfur should be expected to decline.

USAID/DFO Staff Living Conditions Darfur

16. The USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator visited USAID/DFO facilities in both Nyala and El Fasher. USAID/DFO staff in El Fasher and Nyala reside in residences owned and operated by Development Alternatives, Inc. After a site assessment of the area by the USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator the El

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Fasher facilities were rated acceptable. However, the USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator reported serious concerns about the Nyala facilities, which include the inability to control public access to the compound outside of normal business hours and the lack of separation between living space and office space.

17. The USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator recommended the establishment of a separate office/residence for USAID/DFO staff in Nyala. The USAID/DFO and USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator are working with the Regional Security Office (RSO) at the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum on the review and clearance of a new facility.

Local Perceptions of USAID/DFO Staff

18. USAID/DFO staff in both Nyala and El Fasher enjoy a positive reputation with the humanitarian community and within the local communities in which they operate and reside. The USAID/DFO owes much of this positive reputation to USAIDQs ongoing support to humanitarian efforts in Darfur.

NGO Security

19. The capacity of NGOs to undertake security analysis is limited, and many NGOs are not fully utilizing available UNDSS services. In El Fasher, NGOs meet every two weeks to discuss security concerns. NGOs are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain contact with commanders of the armed militias and to identify

areas of control due to changing personnel and alliances.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Camps

¶10. Tensions in IDP camps in North Darfur continue to increase. The reported prevalence of weapons at the household level in camps such as Abu Shouk and Zam Zam is an issue. In addition, reports from AMIS and the UN Mission in Sudan documented the presence of weapons and heavily armed Sudan Liberation Army forces in Zam Zam camp. Skepticism of vaccinations and water chlorination conducted by Water and Environmental Sanitation staff has led to violent confrontations in IDP camps in North and West Darfur.

¶11. Representatives from UN agencies and NGOs reported that IDP camps are increasingly being used as political tools by the various opposition groups to spread propaganda in support of or in opposition to the Darfur Peace Agreement process. Additionally, QYouth patrols, originally created by IDPs to address security concerns within the camps, are becoming increasingly politicized and are challenging the official leadership within the camps.

Recommendations

¶12. The USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator noted that USAID/DFO staff are very conscientious about their personal safety and security and follow established protocols. However, care should be taken to ensure that staff members do not become complacent situational awareness should be maintained at all times. The current security climate in both Nyala and El Fasher are acceptable for continued USAID/DFO operations under current security protocols developed by UNDSS and vetted through the RSO. Overland travel by USAID/DFO staff outside the city limits of Nyala and El Fasher should continue to be considered as exceptional and requires the explicit consent of the USAID/DFO Team Leader and

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RSO. Only travel requests determined to be Qmission criticalQ should be considered for approval. City limits should be defined as within the official Government of National Unity and Humanitarian Aid Commission checkpoints.

¶13. USAID/DFO staff should remind our implementing partners and contractors that they are required to follow the USAID branding regulations for use of USAID logos. Implementing partners should also be advised that they may apply for a logo waiver if security situations warrant.

¶14. Given the dynamic nature of the political and humanitarian situation in the three Darfur states, the USAID/DFO Team Leader and the USAID/OFDA Safety and Security Coordinator recommend that safety and security situation in Khartoum, South Darfur, West Darfur, and North Darfur be re-evaluated at least every three months, more often if the situation further deteriorates.

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